Messages to the Wise: Effective Marine Debris Communication for Older Generations

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Pee Dee River Basin

- Incorporates 45 watersheds
- Covers 5.5 million acres
- Drains to 3rd largest estuary on U.S. east coast
The Grand Strand: One Busy Region...and Growing!

• Expanded over 4x since 1950 (pop. ~92,000) → 370,000 in 2015 (Salvino et. al, 2016).
• Myrtle Beach area receives over 17 million visitors annually (Myrtle Beach CVB, 2016).

Officials aim to lure 20 million tourists annually, without clogging beaches

More than 17 million visitors flocked to Myrtle Beach annually since 2014, but the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce says the tourism industry has the capacity to handle 20 million visitors annually.
Marine Debris: Origins to Oceans
50+ Adult Course

OLLI: Provides “opportunities for adult, noncredit students to achieve intellectual stimulation, as well as cultural and social growth” (OLLI@CCU).

Timeline: Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 – 15 students

Goals:

1. Build community connections to the coastal & marine environment on a watershed scale.
2. Increase adult awareness of & engagement in marine debris issues.
3. Help prevent adverse impacts of marine debris.
6-Week Course Outline

1. Introduction to Marine Debris: What Is It & Why Should We Care?
2. Plastic in the Ocean: Impacts of Marine Debris
3. Unpacking the Problem: Sources, Types, & Transport of Marine Debris
4. Individual & Community Solutions to Marine Debris
5. Stewardship 1: Storm Drain Marking
6. Stewardship 2: Beach Sweep
Making Connections

Value of reflecting on personal interests and connections

• Motivation for visiting / relocating to coastal region
• Ocean & coastal ecosystem services
• Recent natural events & personal experiences
Delivering Marine Debris Messages On a Watershed Scale
Messages with Sensitivity & Humor

Marine Debris from Land and Sea in the environment a long, long time

Each year, tons of plastics and other litter are tossed into rivers, left on beaches, or dumped overboard from recreational and commercial vessels. Litter not only looks bad, but can put people and wildlife in danger. Marine debris can last a long time. Let’s keep South Carolina’s beaches safe and beautiful. Do your part to prevent trash from becoming marine debris. For more information, visit: http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/ermm/outreach/marine_debris.htm
Interactive Lessons with a Big Message: Starting at the “Source”
Interactive Lessons with a Big Message: Ending at the “Sink”
Outcomes & Next Steps

• Positive student engagement IN & OUTSIDE of class

• Program expansion:
  • Horry County Museum Active Adult Learning Series – winter 2018
  • Myrtle Beach State Park Citizen Science Program - summer 2018
Thank You

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